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Ottawa metro

Your essential daily news | THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2015

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THE BUS-TRAIN CRASH TRAGEDY: A NEW REPORT

'This accident goes far beyond the actions of any one individual.'

Transportation Safety Board investigator Rob Johnston more in metroNEWS

VOLUNTEERING

Fix for record checks planned

Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

Ottawa Police say they're working on a plan to fix long backlogs in record checks that are holding up would-be volunteers.

Earlier in the week representatives from Cause Tutoring complained at city hall that waiting months for background checks for volunteers is crippling their tutoring services in the city's shelters and soup kitchens.

"The complaint is quite legitimate," said Daniel Steeves, chief information officer of the Ottawa Police Service.

Steeves said around 55,000 record checks are done each year, but more than half come in during the "fall rush" creating a serious back log.

The office is currently processing record checks from Oct. 1 — two months behind.

Steeves said a team is working hard on a "high tech" solution they're hoping to implement in May or June of 2016.

Working with a local data company, the new system would allow potential volunteers to file checks from their computer at home. Steeves said for straightforward record checks, it could take less than 48 hours.

ANOTHER MASS SHOOTING IN U.S. | WORLD metroNEWS

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Raised in Jordanian shelters, young refugees hope to resettle in Canada with their families. **Canada**

Province knew about welfare issue

AUDITOR GENERAL'S $ REPORT

$52M

The amount the government is now spending to fix errors.

Ontario's Liberal government knew there were problems with a new system for disability and welfare payments, but decided to launch it anyway, the province's auditor general said Wednesday.

The minister responsible for the file, however, says, "Nobody told me."

Defects with the Social Assistance Management System became public when the system erroneously queued up $20 million in overpayments last December. The Ministry of Community and Social Services said Wednesday that $382,000 of that was actually paid out.

Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk said in her annual report Wednesday that the ministry knew there were problems with SAMS before its launch but rolled it out anyway before it could be properly tested.

Minister Helena Jaczek said she only became aware of the issues last December, like the public did.

The government is spending an extra $52 million on fixes — bringing the total cost close to $300 million — but the auditor general reports that the problems were, and continue to be, much more widespread. As of October, SAMS had erroneously calculated $89 million in potential overpayments and $51 million in potential underpayments, Lysyk found. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CAS is not always making abuse checks

AUDITOR GENERAL'S $ REPORT

Ontario's Children's Aid Societies are not always checking for a history of abuse or assessing children's protection needs on time, putting kids at risk, the province's auditor general said Wednesday.

Bonnie Lysyk's office visited seven of Ontario's 47 Children's Aid Societies and in the files they reviewed, not a single child protection investigation was completed within the required 30 days of being notified of concerns. On average, those investigations were completed more than seven months later, Lysyk said. In one case, no investigation was ever completed.

In more than half of the cases the auditor general reviewed where a child had suffered abuse or there was an allegation of abuse, the CASs did not conduct a check of the child abuse register to see if there was a record of any history of abuse with the child or within the family, the auditor reported. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Consumers pay more for Liberal decisions

AUDITOR GENERAL'S $ REPORT

Residents billed extra $37 billion for electricity

Auditor general Bonnie Lysyk says electricity customers in Ontario have paid billions of dollars for the Liberal government's decisions to ignore its own planning process for new power generation projects.

The Ontario Power Authority's 20-year technical plan, which was updated every three years and reviewed by the Ontario Energy Board, would have offered protection to consumers, said Lysyk.

"Instead of following the legislated process, the Ministry of Energy itself effectively assumed responsibility for electricity planning," she said.

The ministry issued policy plans and 93 directives that the auditor said "did not fully consider the state of the electricity market, did not take long-term effects fully into account," and sometimes went against the OPA's advice.

"Ontario electricity ratepayers have had to pay billions for these decisions," she said.

The electricity portion of hydro bills for homes and small businesses rose 70 per cent between 2006 and 2014, which Lysyk said cost consumers $37 billion dollars in so-called Global Adjustment payments to generators — and will cost ratepayers another $133 billion by 2032.

The auditor found the Green Energy Act is also driving up rates. Hydro customers will pay a total of $9.2 billion more for wind and solar projects under the Liberals' 20-year guaranteed-price program for renewable energy than they would have paid under the old program.

Ontario's guaranteed prices for wind power generators are double the U.S. average, while the province's solar power rates are three-and-a-half times higher.

The auditor said the lack of a co-ordinated planning process resulted in additional cost of $408 million to pay generators for the increased power they produced, or for not producing power at the request of the system operator. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Bonnie Lysyk, Ontario's auditor general, tables her 2015 annual report during a press conference at Queen's Park in Toronto on Wednesday. DARREN CALABRESE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **"... the Ministry of Energy itself effectively assumed responsibility for electricity planning.**
> Bonnie Lysyk

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Driver was distracted just before crash, board says

FINDINGS

Factors behind accident

Fifteen "inter-related factors" led to the fatal OC Transpo bus-VIA Rail train crash in September 2013, many related to distraction, speed and visibility, an investigation by the Transportation Safety Board has found.

The bus' ability to withstand a crash was also a factor. Here's a look at some others:

DISTRACTION

· The driver was likely distracted by a standard-issue video monitor installed on all OC Transpo double-decker buses, made worse because he was negotiating a curve.

· Passengers were standing on the upper deck, prompting the driver to make an announcement asking them to sit down.

· He was likely "cognitively distracted" by nearby conservations about seating.

· OC Transpo failed to identify or mitigate risks associated with using the video monitor when buses are in motion.

SPEED

· It was common for the drivers to use that section of the Transitway to make up lost time, and Route 76 was four minutes behind schedule.

· The bus was travelling 7.6 km/h over the 60 km/h posted speed limit, which reduced the driver's stopping distance once he hit the brakes.

· OC Transpo wasn't in the habit of enforcing the speed limit in that area.

· The driver had a "no train expectation," having driven through the crossing about 60 times in the past year with few encounters with VIA Rail trains.

BRAKING

· Once the driver realized a train was crossing, he didn't fully apply the brakes at first.

· OC Transpo trains its drivers to use smooth braking techniques to avoid passenger discomfort and injury. The TSB says that may have contributed to the driver's light initial braking.

VISIBILITY

· The driver's view of the upcoming crossing was obstructed by trees, road signs and the bus' own frame until it was 122.5 metres from the crossing, slightly less than the recommended 130 metres.

· The driver had no other way of knowing if a train was approaching if he couldn't see the barrier and the flashing lights.

EMMA JACKSON/METRO

INVESTIGATION

15 factors combined to cause collision

Emma Jackson
Metro | Ottawa

Safety issues at the Transitway rail crossing where six people were killed in a bus-train collision two years ago were "striking" to federal investigators on the scene, said Transportation Safety Board investigator Rob Johnston.

The TSB released its final report Wednesday on what caused the fatal collision between an OC Transpo double-decker bus and a Toronto-bound VIA Rail train near Fallowfield station on Sept. 18, 2013.

Johnston said 15 factors relating to speed, distraction, visibility and driver training combined to cause the crash. No one element was the direct cause, he said, and the removal of any one thing would change the outcome entirely.

"This accident goes far beyond the actions of any one individual," he said. "Given the circumstances, this accident could have happened to just about any driver."

But a few safety issues were obvious to investigators re-enacting the crash 10 days later, he said.

Visibility, for one, was blocked by overgrown trees, road signs and the bus' frame, which meant driver Dave Woodard wouldn't have seen the flashing lights at the rail crossing right away.

> **Given the circumstances, this accident could have happened to just about any driver.**
> TSB investigator Rob Johnston

And the high location of the bus' video monitor screen used to watch the bus' upper deck was noted, too: being high to the left of the driver, and splitting the already small screen into four quadrants, would make it difficult to watch while driving, said TSB chairwoman Kathy Fox.

"The driver cannot watch it and the road at the same time," she said.

Other factors included Woodard's initial instinct to brake smoothly — something OC Transpo trained its drivers to do to reduce passenger injury — and his speed, which was 7.6 km/h over the posted 60 km/h limit.

The TSB report said OC Transpo didn't enforce speeding very often in that area, so Woodard's speed was common practice.

The city has since fixed most of the issues as the TSB has released safety advisories through the course of its investigation.

The trees were cut back, more transit constables are enforcing speed limits on the Transitway and OC Transpo has changed its video monitors to only show one image instead of four, Johnston said.

Several OC Transpo drivers have called Johnston to tell him "they're much more conscious of how they use the video now."

That's good news for today's passengers, but it's unfortunate it took a deadly crash to make changes, Johnston said.

The safety board issued five recommendations Wednesday to ensure such an accident isn't repeated.

Transport Canada has been asked to require black boxes on all commercial passenger buses, develop guidelines on the use and installation of video monitors, develop guidelines for considering underpasses and overpasses at rail crossings and to update safety requirements to make buses more "crashworthy."

PRESENTATION WHAT THE TSB LEARNED A video presentation showing findings from the 2013 collision between an OC Transpo bus and a Via Rail train in Ottawa is shown during a press conference, as Transportation Safety Board investigator-in-charge Rob Johnston, TSB chair Kathy Fox and board member Helene Gosselin speak to media after releasing the final report in Ottawa on Wednesday.
JUSTIN TANG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

STUDY

Time to reconsider Transitway crossing, TSB says

Building an overpass at the Transitway crossing in Barrhaven will require "significant financial assistance" from the feds, Mayor Jim Watson said Wednesday.

The city has been asked to reconsider grade-separated crossings — an underpass or overpass — where the VIA Rail train tracks cross the Transitway, Fallowfield Road and Woodroffe Avenue in Barrhaven, after a crash killed six people on the Transitway in 2013.

Two years after the collision between an OC Transpo bus and a VIA Rail train, the Transportation Safety Board released its final report Wednesday, making five recommendations to make sure it doesn't happen again. Four of them are directed at Transport Canada to create national safety guidelines, but the local crossing upgrades fall squarely on the city's shoulders.

City manager Kent Kirkpatrick said in a memo that, along with studying the three intersections identified by the TSB, the city is also partnering with VIA Rail to consider separating the tracks at Merivale and Jockvale roads.

"If we're going to study a couple of them we should do all of them in a particular area," Watson said.

But it's no guarantee the study will result in changes.

The former regional municipality had planned grade-separated crossings for Fallowfield, Woodroffe and the Transitway in the 1990s, but by 2003 geotechnical issues had ruled out building an underpass on the Transitway. An overpass was feasible, but it didn't have public support and was expected to cost $100 million, Watson said. The city instead installed a level crossing there with enhanced barriers, lights and bells.

But the time has come to reconsider, TSB chairwoman Kathy Fox said Wednesday.

A lot has changed since 2004: the area's population has nearly doubled and so has local traffic. VIA Rail has also expanded its passenger trains by 130 per cent, and they're travelling faster than they did in 2004. Transitway traffic has also skyrocketed.

The feasibility study should go to tender early next year, but it's unclear how long the study will take.

Barrhaven Coun. Jan Harder said the city and VIA will split the study's $200,000 cost.

Once it's complete, the city would then have to consider its options — and whether the federal government is willing to pay. EMMA JACKSON/METRO

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SPEAKER WHO IS GOING TO FILL THAT BIG GREEN CHAIR? Ballot boxes are put in place in the House of Commons as staff and pages prepare on Wednesday for Thursday's vote for the new Speaker on Parliament Hill. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Distribution of refugees unknown

DEMOGRAPHICS

Cities will get rough estimate from officials

Michael Woods
Metro | Ottawa

Canadian provinces and cities wondering how many Syrian refugees they should be prepared to welcome may not get an exact number, federal immigration officials suggested Wednesday.

The senior officials held a background briefing on efforts to bring 10,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by Dec. 31, and another 15,000 by the end of February. They were speaking on the condition that they not be named.

While provinces, cities and settlement agencies have been hoping to learn the specific number of refugees they should be ready to accommodate, they will seemingly only receive rough estimates.

"We will work towards notional objectives, so the communities have a sense of the scale of what's coming," one official said. "That will probably be continuously adjusted over time. I think that would be the only wise way to do it."

Ottawa could host 2,000

Mayor Jim Watson has said the city can take in 800 to 2,000 Syrian refugees.

Government-assisted refugees are matched to destinations according to a number of factors, including whether they already have family in the community as well as any educational, medical and language needs.

A lack of firm numbers helps avoid a possible situation where refugees would be directed to a location for which they're not well-suited in order to meet a previously set target.

Officials said 271 Syrian refugees have arrived in Canada since Nov. 4; 208 of them privately sponsored, and the rest receiving government assistance.

Another 305 refugees are booked in commercial flights in the coming days.

Processing applications

In addition, 1,015 people have been issued visas to come to Canada, but haven't yet arrived. And another 9,090 refugee settlement applications are in process, with that number expected to grow significantly soon.

However, officials also revealed that of the more than 40,000 refugees the UN tried to contact to bring to Canada, only a fraction were interested in being resettled here right away.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees sent text messages to 41,050 potential applicants as of Nov. 30. Of those, 28.560 were contacted by phone for a follow-up interview with the UNHCR and only 3,049 showed up. Of those, 1,801 were referred to Canadian visa officials for an interview.

The officials suggested that many of the refugees were not necessarily prepared to move by the end of the year, and others still hoped to eventually return to Syria and did not want to be resettled.

Officials said 65 communities across Canada are preparing to welcome privately sponsored refugees, not including Quebec.

A Syrian refugee waits at the registration office at the UNHCR Headquarters in Amman, Jordan, Wednesday. Canada has launched a fast-track resettlement program for Syrian refugees. RAAD ADAYLEH/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

3,049

Out of 41,050 potential refugee applicants — the number of people seeking refugee status in Canada who showed up for interviews with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. **Of those, only 1,801 were referred to Canadian visa officials for interviews.**

ADJUSTMENT

Groups aims to help Syrian newcomers with schoolwork

Haley Ritchie
Metro | Ottawa

Many refugees coming to Ottawa next month will have had their education interrupted by the crisis in Syria and they'll need help outside the classroom to catch up.

A group of volunteers with CAUSE Tutoring, which currently offers education services in shelters and soup kitchens in the city, is currently organizing to help.

"The broad vision of CAUSE is to get access to education for the vulnerable homeless and at-risk population," said executive director Nigel Wodrich.

"Refugees certainly constitute a new vulnerable segment of Canadians who are arriving," he said. "Educational support can be really relevant for them, especially in the context of people arriving from camps and having been several years out of the education system."

CAUSE is currently reaching out to organizations like Refugee 613 and Catholic Churches Association to find out how they can fit into the "patchwork" of organizations that will be offering services.

Especially important will be tutors with knowledge of Arabic, who can help newcomers practise French, English, math and science skills.

Cabbies held a peaceful protest outside the office of taxi dispatch company Coventry Connections Wednesday.
JOE LOFARO/METRO

Cab fee hike 'exorbitant'

LABOUR DISPUTE

Airport taxi drivers say strike hurting livelihoods

Joe Lofaro
Metro | Ottawa

The ongoing airport taxi dispute is taking a toll on some drivers' livelihoods as negotiations are dragging on into their fourth month next week.

Adnan Ghadie, a father of a two-year-old boy, said the strike is affecting his mental health and putting strain on his family's finances. He said he receives approximately $1,000 in strike pay per month, which is not enough to support his family.

"We're just getting by. It hasn't been easy," he said standing next to his colleagues outside his employer's office during a peaceful protest on Wednesday.

"We're not trying to get rich by any means, we're just trying to survive. This is a stand for middle class."

Dispatcher Coventry Connections and the airport authority are asking drivers to now pay $4.50 plus HST to pick up customers at the airport.

Previously, Airport Taxi YOW drivers paid $345 per month, which translated to about $1.50 to $2 per pickup, to have the exclusive right to get a fare at the airport. The new agreement would see $3 go to the airport authority and $1.50 go to Coventry Connections.

The cab company says the fee is comparable to fees charged by other airports across the country.

> **We're just getting by. It hasn't been easy.**
> Driver Adnan Ghadie, on how his family has been coping with the airport taxi strike

Unifor, the union representing the airport taxi drivers, said another meeting is scheduled for Dec. 7 with a provincial mediator and the taxi dispatcher and airport authority.

Harry Ghadban, Unifor's Eastern Ontario Director, said the new fee is "a huge, exorbitant" 400 per cent increase that no driver should have to pay.

DOGGONE LUCK

Nicaraguan dog heals after six-hour snout surgery

A Nicaraguan dog is recovering in an Ottawa veterinarian hospital from surgery to repair his badly wounded snout.

Graham Thatcher says the surgery he performed on Tyson was a success. Thatcher says his wife brought the beagle mix up from Nicaragua after United Airlines initially refused to fly the dog because of his snout, which was gravely damaged in a machete accident. He says he was able to implant a few plates into the dog's jaw and palate, which, with luck, will be the only surgery Tyson will need. THE CANADIAN PRESS

WEB DEVELOPMENT

Tech community lauds PageCloud launch

David Sali
Ottawa
Business Journal

A who's-who of Ottawa tech heavyweights broke out the bubbly at PageCloud's ByWard Market headquarters this week to celebrate the city's most-anticipated software launch in years.

The fledgling firm clearly had good reason to party on the day its product designed to "fix the Internet" went live.

Formed less than 18 months ago, PageCloud had booked more than $1.5 million in advance orders before officially hitting the market. According to CEO Craig Fitzpatrick, that constituted the largest pre-sale tally in the history of Canadian software development.

"I've never seen a product strike a chord like this with the general public," the company's 42-year-old founder told an audience that included a bevy of past OBJ Forty Under 40 recipients and other movers and shakers in Ottawa's tight-knit software community.

Last weekend alone, 1,700 new customers signed up to buy PageCloud's drag-and-drop web design and editing software, accounting for $212,000 in sales in just two days. The company that has pledged to beat heavy hitters such as WordPress, Squarespace and Wix.com at their own game was adding a new client every 10 minutes in the hours leading up to Monday's launch.

Now a 15-person operation, PageCloud has rented a swath of space next to its small third-floor office on Rideau Street in anticipation of boosting its head count to 50 within a year. The company has already landed more than $6 million in seed funding, attracting local investors such as Shopify's Tobias Lütke and fellow software entrepreneurs Sam Zaid and Fred Belanger.

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OPP develop mental health resources

POLICING

Strategy in response to ombudsman's report

Ontario Provincial Police have introduced a mental health strategy aimed at helping officers deal with their own mental health as well as those they deal with on the job.

OPP commissioner Vince Hawkes says by supporting the health of its officers, the force will be better able to perform its work in general and will be more cognizant of the complicated mental health issues of the communities it serves.

He says the force will support both active and retired officers as well as their families.

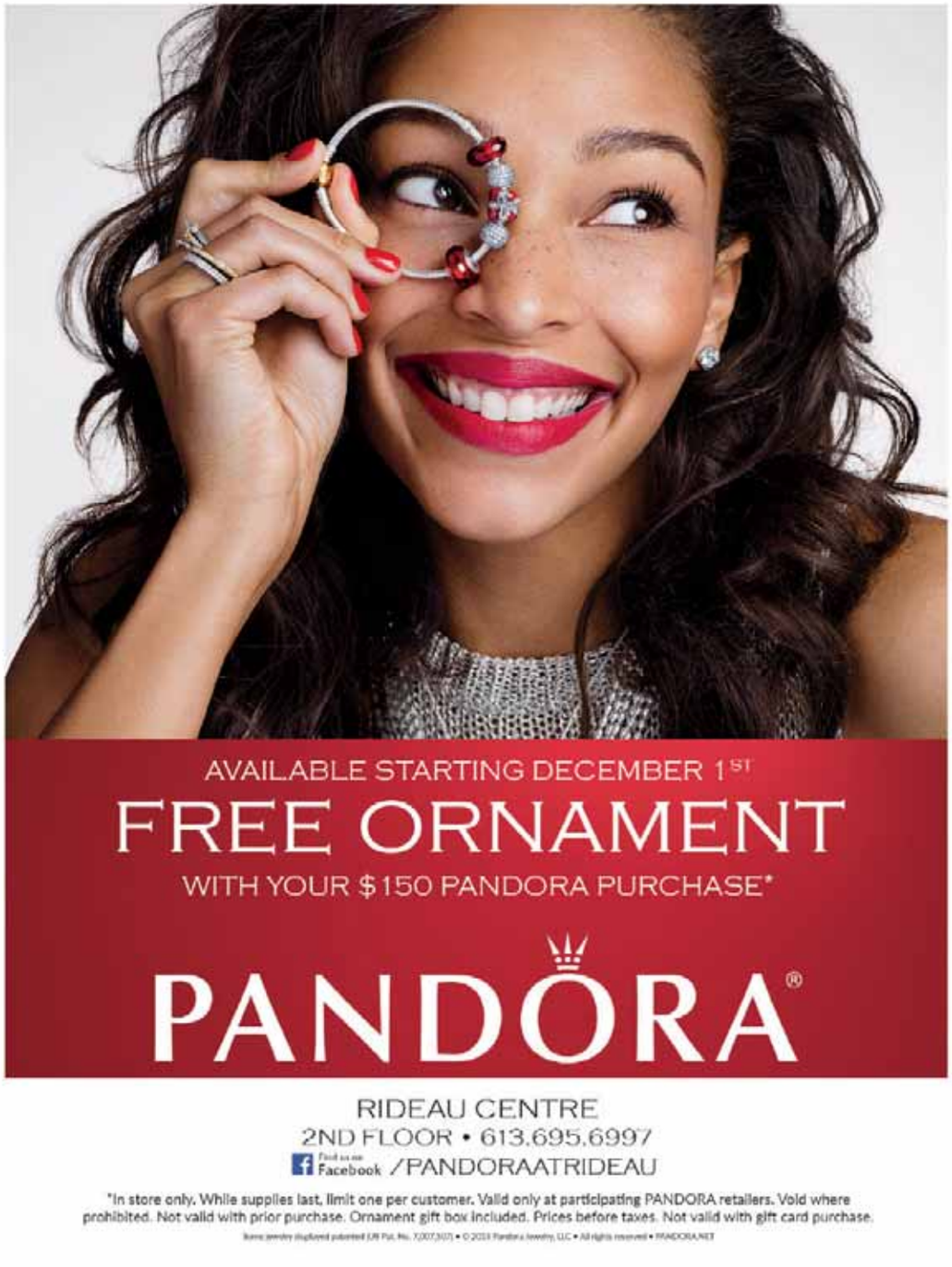
Hawkes says officers will receive training to understand illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety.

He adds the force will increase the officers' peer support program, improve data collection to better understand mental health issues, and boost early referrals from police to communities' mental health services.

Hawkes says the strategy comes after important work done by retired officers to shine a light on the issue, and an ombudsman's report that detailed the force's problems addressing mental health issues.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

OPP commissioner Vince Hawkes TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE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PSAC

Psychological health a priority: Union

Michael Woods
Metro | Ottawa

A new report on mental health in the federal public service ushers in the beginning of a new era, the head of Canada's largest federal public largest union said Wednesday.

The report, a joint effort of the federal government and public service unions, calls for a new culture in the public service that enshrines psychological health and well-being in all aspects of the workplace.

"For us, it's a huge step forward that the government finally moves in this direction," Robyn Benson, national president of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, said in an interview. "It's important to recognize that there is work that needs to be done in our workplaces around mental health."

Mental health claims account for nearly half of all disability claims by federal public servants.

The report, released Wednesday, is the result of an agreement reached last March between then-Treasury Board president Tony Clement and PSAC to establish a joint task force to address mental health in the public service.

The report makes 11 recommendations, chief among them that the federal public service adopt a vision "to create a culture that enshrines psychological health, safety and well-being in all aspects of the workplace through collaboration, inclusivity and respect."

"A lot of employees don't necessarily feel those things when they come to work every day," said Bob Kingston, president of PSAC's agriculture union and co-chair of the task force. "It makes the difference between wanting to come to work and not wanting to come to work.

"We need to see a culture shift in the public service."

Treasury Board President Scott Brison FRED CHARTRAND/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

POLITICS

Queen's Park updates provincial ridings

The Ontario government is adjusting the province's electoral map to bring it in line with the one used for federal elections.

The government says population changes in southern Ontario have prompted it to add 15 new ridings to that part of the province, bringing the total up to 122.

The government says most of the new additions are in rapidly growing major centres like Toronto, Ottawa, York and Durham.

The number of seats in northern Ontario remains fixed at 11.

The new electoral boundaries closely mimic similar changes made at the federal level, where new ridings were established across the province during the October election.

The new ridings will be in place on time for the next provincial election, which is currently slated for some time in 2018.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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BROKEN BONDS | PART III

Former inmate and prisoner advocate Mo Korchinski. The idea of mothering a child while in jail "forced you to look deep ... and that started the healing process," she says. JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

For incarcerated women, motherhood can be life-changing. One jail in B.C. was helping inmates make the most of that opportunity. Now, the fight is on to ensure that it still can.

'Everybody needs hope'

Sidney Cohen
For Metro

"If you consent to this call being recorded, and if you accept this call as a collect call, dial one now."

It's June 10, and the automated message indicates Melody Hutchinson is calling collect from a payphone inside Alouette Correctional Centre for Women.

Hutchinson is 25 and indigenous, from Trail, B.C. She is pregnant and due to give birth about two weeks before her release at the end of July.

Hutchinson is trying, desperately, to access Alouette's mother-baby program, which allows women who give birth while incarcerated to live with their children inside jail.

"They're not even giving me a chance. My son's not even born yet. People make mistakes, but people change," Hutchinson says.

The program ran from 2005-2008 before being shut down. Inmates then challenged the closure in court, on constitutional grounds. In 2013, a B.C. Supreme Court judge ruled that cancelling the program violated the charter rights of mothers and babies to be together.

Following a $163,000 renovation, B.C.'s Ministry of Justice announced the reopening of Alouette's mother-baby unit in June 2014. But since then not one inmate has been allowed to participate.

Hutchinson says she has been in and out of jail since she was a teenager and had a "crazy childhood." Her father was a musician who travelled a lot when she was young, she says, and her mother was an addict. She spent time in foster care and youth corrections. She tried crack for the first time at age 13.

Hutchinson has two other young children who live together with adoptive parents in Coquitlam. When she found out she was pregnant for a third time last fall, Hutchinson says, "I just wanted to change my life. I was freaked out and I didn't want to lose my son."

> **It doesn't take rocket science to keep a baby with a mother. It takes motivation at the top levels.**
> Dr. Ruth Elwood Martin, UBC Centre for Prison Health and Education

In February, Hutchinson says, she relapsed after several months off drugs.

Her brother was about to go to jail for a long time on weapons charges, and they partied on and off for three weeks. She was arrested in March for theft breaching her bail.

"All I want them to see is that I'm trying," Hutchison says. "To have someone from the ministry be like, 'You know what, we're here to help you, OK? And if you can commit to this goal, than we will help you succeed.'"

Time's up and the call is cut.

***

Hutchinson served four months at Alouette. She gave birth on July 5, but her baby boy was not admitted to Alder, Alouette's mother-baby unit. Instead, he was put into foster care.

Decisions about who can participate in the program are made by B.C. Corrections on a case-by-case basis. The branch looks at "each woman's risk assessment, history of offences or any court orders prohibiting contact with children," said a B.C. Ministry of Justice spokesperson in an email sent June 3.

If there's a suggestion the child may be at risk, the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) will get involved.

"If a woman has applied to the Mother-Child Program and MCFD has child protection concerns, BC Corrections waits for MCFD's independent decision to be made before finalizing the application," wrote another justice ministry spokesperson.

While she was pregnant at Alouette, Hutchison took life-skills classes, she signed up for outpatient drug treatment, and she got letters of support from her lawyer and her father.

But MCFD was skeptical.

"They're basically saying there's not enough supervision, that I'm high-risk for my kid," she said during the June 10 phone conversation. "I'm just so freaked out."

Dr. Ruth Elwood Martin is director of the University of British Columbia's Collaborating Centre for Prison Health and Education and was a physician at Alouette during the mother-baby program's first iteration. She says that, in order for the program to work, all the ministries need to be on board.

"What needs to happen is political will to have the different ministries — Health, Children and Family Development, Justice — to actually collaborate over finding a way to keep the babies with their mothers while the mothers are incarcerated."

Brenda Tole, a former Alouette warden who oversaw the creation and operation of the mother-baby program, agrees.

"You have to have the initiative to work with all of those ministries and community agencies to bring back all that support, and I'm not sure ... if the will is there to do that. What's happening right now is they're just saying that the Ministry of Children and Families is not supportive, it's not in the plan. Well, really, their only other plan is foster care and that's a terrible outcome," she says.

"I almost wish that a lot of the people who have control over this could have a direct conversation with someone that's lost their baby."

***

Advocates say that Alouette, though not ideal, is a practical place in which to introduce a woman to motherhood and to teach approaches to parenting.

The jail's premises are surveilled 24 hours a day, there is a drug-and-alcohol counsellor and parenting classes, and the health care centre is attached to the mother-baby unit.

Mo Korchinski, a prisoner advocate and former Alouette inmate, says that a lot of women entering jail have lost hope. They are living on the streets, killing themselves slowly with drugs and alcohol.

Like many addicted women who wind up in jail, Korchinski lost her kids when she became an addict. "(The mother-baby program) forced you to look deep," she says. "And those feelings of a mother — you couldn't deny them anymore 'cause it was right in your face, and that started the healing process."

A recent Statistics Canada report found that 94 per cent of women in provincial jails struggle with substance abuse.

"Where is it going to change?" Korchinski asks, and then emphatically answers her own question: "It changes with the mother-baby program, because these women now have hope. ... Everybody needs hope and everybody needs a purpose in life."

This summer UBC's prison-health centre published a set of guidelines and best practices for prison mother-baby programs. Advocates hope the guidelines will help meaningfully reactivate the Alouette's program, which, despite the province's assurances that it is available, has not hosted any of the three mothers, including Melody Hutchinson, who have given birth at Alouette since the program's 2014 reopening.

Broken Bonds

PART I
"A success story"
Tues. Dec. 1

PART II
"It all falls apart"
Wed. Dec. 2

PART III
"What now?"
Thurs. Dec. 3

***

Today Hutchinson is working full-time and living in Terrace B.C., near her father. She's struggling to recover her son from the foster family he was placed with while she was in jail.

"Her son's here in Maple Ridge and they won't transfer him up," says Korchinski, who's trying to help Hutchinson get custody of her baby. "She has to take a 28-hour Greyhound bus ride down here to see him, and she gets a two-hour visit a day, and she has to take a week off at work."

Korchinski says Hutchinson's going to keep fighting to get her son back, but it's harder now that he's growing attached to his foster family.

Each time Hutchinson visits her son, Korchinski says, she will "go through that all over again."

"I was with her when she went and visited him. I was in tears for her."

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Children of war on their way

SYRIAN REFUGEES

Families await flights to Canada in Irbid, Jordan

Here are the children of war. Some were born in exile in Jordan, while others watched their homes in Syria being destroyed and then had to flee the conflict with anxious parents and frightened siblings.

Now their young lives are about to undergo another profound transformation.

If all goes well, these children — and their families — will be resettled in Canada, once Canadian officials in Amman complete medical and security screening and issue them immigration documents.

The children, from five different families from towns in southern Syria, have been living in Irbid, in northern Jordan, and were photographed by Canadian Press journalist Paul Chiasson.

Some are coming to Canada under the private sponsorship program, while others are in the government-sponsored stream.

The refugees know how fortunate they are. As Canada's massive humanitarian mission gets underway, other Syrians are calling the International Organization of Migration, begging to be among the 25,000 Syrians Canada has promised to bring here by the end of February.

"Syrians are reading about the Canadian mission in the press and they are very media savvy. Word gets out fast. We have to tell them to take their case to the UN," said Craig Murphy, with the IOM in Jordan.

On Sunday the IOM opened a processing centre on behalf of Canada in a military hangar in Marka, north of Amman. Officials have begun interviewing hundreds of Syrians a day.

The first plane of Syrian refugees is expected to be in the air by mid-December, said Murphy.

Refugees from both Jordan and Lebanon will fly through Amman, boarding Royal Jordanian charter flights in groups of 300 or 350 bound for Toronto or Montreal.

"As soon as we have a threshold of 300 people who are travel ready we will have our first charter flight," said Murphy. "I expect a very quick turnaround time."

All photos taken in Irbid, Jordan 1 **Tammim, 6, from Kherbet Ghazala** — His family came to Jordan in 2013, after heavy shelling in their village. 2 **Abedr, 2, from Kherbet Ghazala** — She is the youngest of four. Her father lost both his businesses in Syria to violence and shelling. 3 **Braa, 3, from Tal Shehab** — Her family was originally hoping to go to the U.S. but now favour Canada becuase they feel it will be more welcoming towards Muslims. 4 **Mohammad** — He is baby brother of Tammim and was born in Jordan.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is in charge of referring the cases to the IOM, for a second set of interviews. The UN is focusing on families, single women and the most vulnerable, following Ottawa's direction.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

1,015

The number of permanent resident visas issued, but refugees have yet to arrive.

41,050

The number of text messages sent to potential refugee applicants interested in coming to Canada

9,090

The number of refugee resettlement applications currently being processed

271

The total number of Syrian refugees who have arrived in Canada

IMMIGRATION

Canada could welcome 50K refugees by end of 2016: Minister

The federal government has already issued 1,015 permanent resident visas to Syrian refugees destined for a new life in Canada. Meanwhile, the federal government Tuesday signalled Canada could welcome as many as 50,000 refugees by the end of 2016.

"The number of refugees is likely to be in the order of 35,000 to 50,000," Immigration Minister John McCallum said Wednesday after consulting with several provinces and territories over the numbers they will be able to take. "That's not yet in the official plan, but based on the discussions we've been having, it's likely to be in that order."

An estimated 271 Syrian refugees have been resettled in Canada since Nov. 4, with thousands more expected provided Ottawa finds sufficient airline capacity from Jordan and Turkey.

Those flights could begin as early as Dec. 10. Toronto's Pearson airport is preparing a rarely used terminal that will be dedicated to processing the refugees. The Canada Border Services Agency will oversee the processing of the refugees at the terminal.

It was the first of what is expected to be weekly briefings on the Liberal government's efforts to take in 25,000 Syrians by the amended deadline of the end of next February, and as many as twice that number by the end of 2016, it now appears.

> **"The number of refugees is likely to be in the order of 35,000 to 50,000.**
> John McCallum

McCallum said Tuesday that the federal government needs to do a better job of communicating both the challenges and successes of that campaign pledge, in order to keep Canadians informed and on board with their effort.

The United Nations attempted to contact a total of 41,050 refugees through text messages toward the end of November. Of that number, 28,560 refugees were successfully contacted, and 3,049 were interviewed by United Nations officials.

From that pool, a total of 1,801 refugees or refugee families were referred by the UN to Canadian officials for interviews

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship John McCallum THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

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WAY!
Yes
I'VE BEEN
A GOOD
Boy
ELFIE
SELFIE
H&M

Shooting in California centre leaves 14 dead

What is known so far

• Lt. Rich Lawhead said Wednesday that a call came in just before 11 a.m. PST that multiple shots had been fired in the area of the Inland Regional Center. Lavinia Johnson, executive director of the Inland Regional Center, told CNN that somebody pulled the fire alarm, and shortly after, the building went into lockdown.

• San Bernardino police spokesman Sgt. Vicki Cervantes told The Associated Press there were reports from witnesses of one to three gunmen.

• As the manhunt went on, stores, office buildings and at least one school were locked down in the city of 214,000 people about 100 kilometres east of Los Angeles, and roads were blocked off.

• The Inland Regional Center provides services for more than 30,000 people in the region with developmental delays and their families, and employs 670 staff according to its Facebook page.

"As an agency among agencies, Inland Regional Center co-ordinates with generic services to normalize the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families by working to include them in the everyday routines and life rhythms of the community and by facilitating needed supports for them," the Inland Regional Center's Facebook page reads.

• Brandon Hunt, an employee at the Inland Regional Center, told CNN that there was a banquet for county personnel inside the building and that the shooting happened in the auditorium. There were about 500 IRC employees inside the building, Hunt said. "Employees were locked in offices, closets, just to try and stay safe," he said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

SAN BERNARDINO

One of three suspects shot by officers in standoff

Police say one suspect in the deadly shooting at a social services facility in Southern California has been shot in a gun battle with officers.

San Bernardino police Sgt. Vicki Cervantes said Wednesday that there is still possibly a suspect "outstanding."

Cervantes would not elaborate, and the condition of the suspect was not known. She says an officer was hurt in the shootout and went to hospital with injuries that were not life-threatening.

Authorities say gunmen killed at least 14 people and wounded more than a dozen others at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino in what authorities described as a targeted mission.

It was unclear if the suspect was one of the gunmen, but police earlier said the attackers may have fled in a dark SUV.

> **We have a pattern now of mass shootings in this country that has no parallel anywhere else.**
> U.S. President Barack Obama

Police shed no light on a motive for the nation's latest mass shooting, which came five days after a gunman opened fire at Planned Parenthood in Colorado, killing three.

"They came prepared to do what they did, as if they were on a mission," San Bernardino Police Chief Jarrod Burguan said, noting the attackers carried long guns — which can mean rifles or shotguns.

Witnesses said several people locked themselves in their offices, desperately waiting to be rescued by police, after gunfire erupted at the Inland Regional Center, which serves people with developmental disabilities.

FBI agents and other law enforcement authorities converged on the centre and searched room to room for the attacker or attackers, Burguan said. But he said they might have escaped in an SUV.

No weapons were recovered at the centre, though authorities were investigating unidentified items in the building and brought in bomb squads, Burguan said.

Ten of the wounded were hospitalized in critical condition, and three were in serious condition, San Bernardino Fire Chief Tom Hannemann said. Police cautioned that the number of people killed and wounded were preliminary estimates that could change. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

1 A SWAT team arrives near the scene of a shooting in San Bernardino, Calif. As many as three gunmen opened fire at a social services facility. **2** Women speak with a firefighter at the **triage area** **3 A police helicopter** hovers over the Inland Regional Center. LOS ANGELES NEWS GROUP/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIDDLE EAST

ISIL killing gay men in Syria and Iraq

Before a crowd of men on a street in the Syrian city of Palmyra, the masked Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) judge read out the sentence against two men convicted of homosexuality: They would be thrown to their deaths from the roof of the nearby Wael Hotel.

He asked one of the men if he was satisfied with the sentence. Death, the judge told him, would help cleanse him of his sin.

"I'd prefer it if you shoot me in the head," 32-year-old Hawas Mallah replied helplessly. The second man, 21-year-old Mohammed Salameh, pleaded for a chance to repent, promising never to have sex with a man again, according to a witness among the onlookers that sunny July morning.

"Take them and throw them off," the judge ordered. Other masked extremists tied the men's hands up and blindfolded them. They led them to the roof of the four-story hotel, according to the witness, who spoke in Reyhanli, Turkey on condition he be identified only by his first name, Omar.

Notorious for their gruesome killing methods, ISIL reserves one of its most brutal for suspected homosexuals. Videos it has released show militants dangling men over the precipices of buildings by their legs to drop them head-first or tossing them over the edge. At least 36 men in Syria and Iraq have been killed by ISIL militants on charges of sodomy, according to the New York-based OutRight Action International.

A 26-year-old Syrian gay man told The Associated Press that even two years after fleeing to Turkey, he wakes up shaken by nightmares that he is about to be hurled from a building. The man spoke on condition that he be identified as Daniel Halaby, the name he now uses in his activism tracking ISIL atrocities. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Daniel Halaby shows a photo of militants throwing a man off a roof. HUSSEIN MALLA/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FIGHTING ISIL

Kurds' leading role complicates alliance

Drawing on thousands of combatants from Syria's mix of religious and ethnic groups, a U.S.-backed alliance called the Syrian Democratic Forces has emerged as the most effective fighting force against the ISIL group.

But the dominant role of Kurdish fighters in the alliance is a concern for majority Sunni Arab factions and their regional backers, raising questions about the group's future role in a broader political context in Syria.

The coalition already faces opposition from other groups fighting to topple President Bashar Assad because those groups widely distrust the Kurds.

And while the coalition has been capturing territory steadily in northern Syria from extremists, it is hampered greatly by its inability to retake areas with a majority Sunni Arab population.

In a devastated landscape where extremists and Islamic groups largely preside, the Syrian Democratic Forces are the closest thing to an inclusive and moderate fighting force in Syria. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIA FLOODS STRAND RESIDENTS People wade through a flooded street in Chennai, the capital of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, on Wednesday. Weeks of torrential rains have forced the airport in Chennai to close and have cut off roads and highways, leaving tens of thousands of people stranded in their homes, government officials said. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AFGHANISTAN

In rebuilding lies fear of more unrest

Two months after the Taliban rampaged through the northern Afghan city of Kunduz, residents sift through rubble, wonder how they will rebuild and worry insurgents will return.

The Taliban swept into the strategic northern city in late September, holding it for three days and looting and destroying shops before being driven out by a massive counteroffensive backed by U.S. airstrikes.

The street by street fighting devastated wide swaths of Kunduz at a time when Afghanistan's finances are stretched thin by a seemingly never-ending war. International aid is being scaled down alongside the withdrawal of most foreign troops, who officially concluded their combat mission last year.

The Taliban are meanwhile dug in on the city's outskirts, and many fear they could return.

> **"I can't trust the government anymore.**
> Ahmad Jan

"I lost everything I had — my house, my business and my property," said Ahmad Jan, who sold TVs and DVDs in Kunduz. The Taliban torched his shop, and then his home was demolished during the battle to drive them out, he said. He moved his family to a neighbouring province for safety.

"I can't trust the government anymore, I have lost my hope in them," he said.

The acting spokesman for the governor of Kunduz, Abdul Wasi Basel, said the priority was security, followed by restoring water, electricity and other services. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Talks come with drama

ENVIRONMENT

Climate deal negotiations likened to movie plot

With world leaders back home, it's time for the hardcore negotiators to work on the more mundane guts of a climate deal, and they are being told to quicken their pace.

Generally, climate negotiations follow a certain rhythm, veteran negotiators and observers say. Wednesday is the middle of the nitty-gritty time when the building blocks of a deal start to form.

"It's like seeing an action movie," said former U.S. climate negotiator Nigel Purvis, who is now president of Climate Advisers. "There's generally a plot, bad guys come to threaten the world. Eventually humanity rallies together and overcomes. That's the kind of thing that happens here."

For the next few days, negotiators will be working to get the less-controversial subjects finished and explore possible compromises on the bigger sticking points, all before work gets kicked up to higher levels. The lower-level negotiators have a Saturday-noon deadline to come up with language for a new text of a deal that narrows the options to something the big guns start with, according to French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, who is the president of the climate talks.

"We must speed the process up because we have much work to do," Fabius said at a Wednesday news conference. "Compromise solutions must be found as soon as possible."

A record number of world leaders gathering in one place to discuss the single issue of climate change sends a strong signal, United Nations climate chief Christiana Figueres said. Fabius called it "strong momentum," a phrase echoed later Wednesday by chief U.S. negotiator Todd Stern.

The key is for many issues to be settled by Saturday, Fabius said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

REFUGEES

EU denies pact to bring 500,000 Syrians to area

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said Wednesday he expects a German-led secret pact to be revealed soon that would bring up to 500,000 Syrians from Turkey directly into the European Union.

EU Commission vice-president Frans Timmermans, however, bluntly rejected Orban's assertion.

"I'll try to explain this in clear terms: nonsense," Timmermans said in Brussels. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Fifth grade students work on programming during their weekly computer science lesson at Marshall Elementary School in Marysville, Wash. The school joined a growing movement across the U.S. to expose more public school children to computer science. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Computer science is now child's play

EDUCATION

Kindergarten kids learning programming in new push

Moving her finger over the laptop trackpad, six-year-old Lauren Meek drags and drops a block of code to build a set of instructions. She clicks the "run" button and watches as the character moves through a maze. She then pumps her fist in excitement.

"Yes! This is so easy," says Meek, a kindergartner at Marshall Elementary in Marysville, north of Seattle.

This fall, most elementary school students in the Marysville School District are getting 40-minute weekly computer science lessons as part of their core instruction — part of a growing effort nationwide to expose more public school children to computer science, even as early as in kindergarten.

Backed by technology leaders, nonprofits and companies, schools in New York, San Francisco and other cities have committed to offer computer science in all grade levels.

Currently, computer science is taught in only about one of four high schools nationwide with fewer in lower middle and elementary school grades. And only 27 states allow a computer science course to be counted toward graduation requirements in math or science, according to Code.org, a Seattle-based national non-profit.

But there's been a surge in interest in recent years. In 2015, nearly 49,000 students took the Advanced Placement exam in computer science, a 25 per cent increase from the previous year.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

IN BRIEF

Complaints regarding wireless services drop

Canadians had fewer official complaints about their wireless communication services but more concerns about their Internet plans, according to the latest report from the telecom industry's consumer watchdog. Internet complaints now account for 26.1 per cent of all telecom complaints, up by more than half since last year. Wireless complaints have dropped from more than 60 per cent of the total to 52.9 per cent.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

BoC keeps rate at 0.5%

The Bank of Canada left its interest rate unchanged at 0.5 per cent Wednesday at a time when the U.S. Federal Reserve is poised to hike its own benchmark for the first time in years. Canada continues to deal with the shock of already-low commodity prices, which have sunk even further and dragged down the loonie, it said. THE CANADIAN PRESS

market minute

DOLLAR 74.91¢ (+0.08¢)

TSX 13,463.82 (-172.24)

OIL $39.94 US (-$1.91)

GOLD $1,053.80 US (-$9.70)

NATURAL GAS: $2.165 US (-6.6¢)
DOW JONES: 17,729.68 (-158.67)

WEB CULTURE

Yahoo travels road taken by ex-rivals

Yahoo Inc. is mulling selling off its web portal and search engine, the brands that defined its rise in the late 1990s. Here's a look back to those heady dot-com days to explore Yahoo's former competitors.

ASK JEEVES

Launched in 1998, Ask Jeeves invited users to type in a full question for a more organic kind of query. By 2006, the company "fired" Jeeves and morphed into Ask.com.

AOL

AOL provided dial-up service to millions in the second half of the 1990s. In 1998, it bought Netscape and in 2001 it merged with Time Warner. Things went south from there. Broadband gobbled up its dial-up customers and the dot-com bubble decimated its stock value.

ALTAVISTA

One of the first search engines in the late '90s, it was snapped up in 2003 for a mere $140 million. Subsequently bought by Yahoo!, it folded into that search engine's index, and officially died in 2013.

MSN

Launched by Bill Gates the same day as Microsoft's Windows 95 more than 20 years ago, MSN is one of the few early pioneers to endure into the age of Google and Facebook. MSN is still the gateway to millions of Hotmail and Outlook accounts.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ford pickup trucks top most-stolen list

An insurance industry association says pickup trucks are the hottest vehicle for thieves.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada says the Ford F-350 and F-250 models take up nine spots on its top 10 list of most frequently stolen vehicles. The other vehicle is a Cadillac Escalade SUV.

Ford F-350 and F-250 models take up nine spots on a top 10 list of stolen vehicles. CONTRIBUTED

The insurance association says Canadian border guards are seeing shipping containers stocked with car and truck parts in an effort to fool inspectors. They say they have recovered more than $10 million in stolen vehicles at the ports this year.

Rick Dubin, vice-president of the Insurance Bureau of Canada, says stolen vehicles are up one per cent in 2014 across Canada, with the biggest jump coming from a 29 per cent increase in thefts in British Columbia.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Thursday, December 3, 2015

CHANTAL HÉBERT: ON THE BETA-VERSION LIBERAL GOVERNMENT

“In his new role, Justin Trudeau is turning out to be a bit of an Energizer bunny. His batteries don’t seem to run out. Time will tell if his on/off switch functions as well, if at all.

It’s really a beta version of his government that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is introducing to the House of Commons this week.

More than half of his ministers are taking a seat in the Commons for the first time on Thursday and a good number of them cannot yet count on the backing of a full staff to see them through their parliamentary baptism of fire.

It has barely been a month since they have all been sworn in.

Jean Chrétien, who was first elected in late October 1993, did not reopen Parliament until almost three months later.

In 2006, Stephen Harper gave himself more than two months before his minority Conservative government entered the Commons.

At least in part, the fast hand of the body clock of the incoming prime minister accounts for this hasty opening of the new Parliament.

In his new role, Trudeau is turning out to be a bit of an Energizer bunny. Like the rabbit in the iconic commercial, his batteries don’t seem to run out. Time will tell whether his on/off switch functions as well, if at all.

The prime minister is eager to bring in the retargeted family tax cuts he campaigned on. Those — along with the costs of the Liberal Syrian refugee resettlement plan — are to be put to votes over the short parliamentary sitting.

But in practical terms, that could have waited until after the New Year with little harm done to the 2016 tax planning of Canadians or to the capacity of the government to spend on resettling refugees.

Similarly, the parliamentary committees Trudeau plans to put in place to deal with time-sensitive files such as medically-assisted suicide or the Trans-Pacific trade deal will be hard-pressed to accomplish much between now and the first weeks of January.

In opposition, Trudeau reveled in his life on the road – outside the Parliament Hill fishbowl.

His sense that the fortunes of his government will not necessarily play out on the stage of the Commons may account for his willingness to treat this first sitting more as an audition than a definitive production.

Before this fall, no federal party had ever jumped from third to first place. It is possible that few anticipated the magnitude of the staffing challenge that stood to result from that feat.

The Liberal support crew that crossed the aisle from opposition to government along with Trudeau was the smallest ever. From 36 offices in opposition, the party in government now has to fill positions in 184, including 31 ministerial suites plus the Prime Minister’s Office.

The civil service was always going to play a larger role in the affairs of a Liberal government than it did under Stephen Harper. In these early days, it is doing so as much by default as by design.

The other collateral consequence of Trudeau’s decision to hit the ground running has been to consolidate the already uncommonly strong links between his administration and Kathleen Wynne’s Ontario government.

Much of the intellectual and strategic impetus behind his victory hailed from Queen’s Park’s Liberal backrooms, and it is the place the new government has turned to for seasoned staff.

Ontario is lining up to be the major presence in Trudeau’s corridors of power what Quebec was in the days of his father, Brian Mulroney and Jean Chrétien.

Past federal governments had an adversarial relationship with their Ontario counterparts. But for a rare time the Liberals are in power in tandem at Queen’s Park and on Parliament Hill. For better or for worse, the close ties between the two governments could become a defining feature of Trudeau’s mandate.

As Liberals pour into the national capital, the other parties are undergoing a brain drain of sorts.

NDP campaign chief Anne McGrath has migrated to Edmonton and Alberta’s New Democrat government. Thomas Mulcair’s chief-of-staff Alain Gaul has gone back to Montreal.

The Bloc Québécois has lost the party’s second-in-command, Catherine Fournier, to PQ leader Pierre-Karl Péladeau and the National Assembly.

With no Conservative government in any of the four larger provinces, hundreds of former aides to the previous government make up a wandering army of political orphans.

A hyperactive prime minister may be just what the opposition parties need to get over their post-election doldrums.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in Metro every Thursday.

THE MICROTREND: Turning the frown upside-down

And you thought *your* yearbook photos of years past were embarrassing. In the 1910s, a murderous stare and toothless grimace were the norms. Researchers at the University of California and Brown University have published a digital analysis of 37,000 senior yearbook portraits from 1905 to 2013. They found the corners of our mouths have been steadily turning upwards for a century. Thanks to our increasingly casual culture — and perhaps modern dentistry — smiles have gotten wider, jollier and more revealing of pearly whites, with a noticeable shift around the 1940s. Smiling in snapshots was once considered idiotic and embarrassing. Richard Beard, the owner of Britain’s first portrait-photography studio, instructed his 19th-century subjects to set their mouths in a stern line by saying not “cheese” but “prunes.” SOURCE: THE WASHINGTON POST

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

The Pirelli calendar isn’t a feminist victory. It’s all about Annie Leibovitz.

It’s ridiculous to call the calendar a calendar — or even the product of Pirelli, the high-end tire company that pays for it.

It’s all about Annie Leibovitz.

In the past, the company has let photographers do as they please while shooting the annual calendar/marketing ploy/exclusive photography collection that is reportedly only gifted to 20,000 VIPs.

Mostly, photographers shot sexy, naked or half-naked models. Even Leibovitz opted for clothes-free women in 2000, when she first shot the calendar, though her work then was on the artsy end of nude-pictorial continuum.

This time she’s produced 12 moving portraits of mostly clothed women, chosen not for their erotic power but for their economic or cultural might.

“This calendar is so completely different,” Leibovitz says in a promotional video.

But the difference is not so much a sign of the times as a sign of Leibovitz’s politics.

“Believe me, I do not think naked girls are going out of fashion,” says writer and subject Fran Lebowitz, before jumping on the bandwagon: “But it’s interesting that people are interested in different ways of looking at women.”

Are they? Or are they interested in being associated with Leibovitz, one of the world’s most respected and highly paid photographers? She personally invited the calendar’s models — a comic star, a Hollywood producer, a tennis sensation, a modern-art matriarch. Many of them told the media that it was the chance to work with Leibovitz that persuaded them to pose.

Other women, and similar portraits, could have been shot a decade ago. There’s nothing about this moment that’s inhospitable to sexualized nudity, except, perhaps, the fear of being cliché. It’s more a question of taste, in other words, than of politics.

If anything, you might hail this as a moment not for women, but powerful women, a depiction of female accomplishment at rarefied levels. That Leibovitz might want to celebrate that subculture shouldn’t surprise — she belongs to it.

“To pay tribute to women at all ages who have accomplished something, it’s quite a statement,” says the Iranian artist and subject Shirin Neshat in the video.

Not quite. Yes, we should absolutely acknowledge women’s accomplishments. We should absolutely celebrate beauty, clothed. But neither should be construed as synonymous with women’s status in general.

The new Pirelli calendar is either Annie Leibovitz’s ode to women of power, or their ode to Leibovitz, or both, destined for the walls of the elite few.

And Pirelli? It just wants to sell tires.

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Moz gets award for bad sex writing
Morrissey wins annual Literary Review Bad Sex award for a scene in his first novel, List of the Lost.

Five quirky books to gift

Twisted cat poetry only Charles Bukowski could have come up with and life lessons from Little Miss are among the holiday season's more unusual books. Here are five suggestions. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

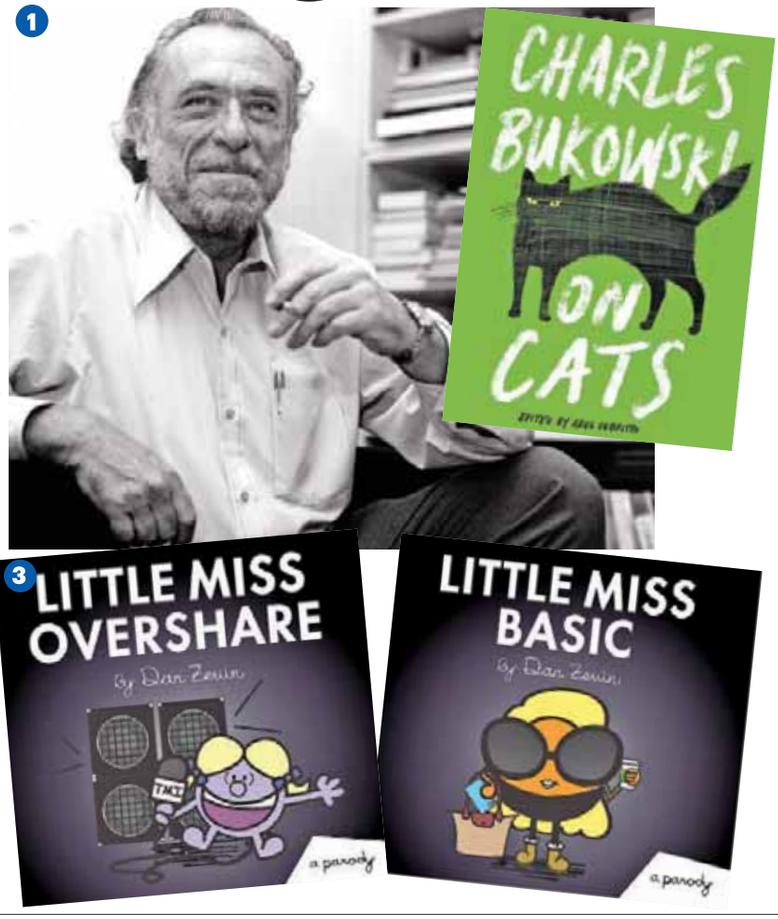
1 On Cats by Charles Bukowski, edited by Abel Debritto
This anthology of the late writer's poems and short prose honours the animals that touched his soul. From Ecco, an imprint of HarperCollins, $25.99.

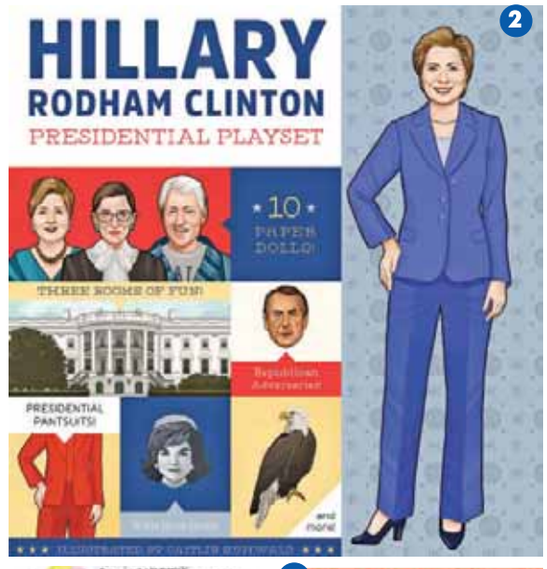
2 Hillary Rodham Clinton Presidential Playset, illustrated by Caitlin Kuhwald
Choose a facial expression and pantsuit from among the presidential candidate's greatest hits. From Quirk Books, $14.95.

3 Little Miss and Mr. Me Me Me parody series by Dan Zevin, illustrated by Dylan Klymenko
The iconic little children's books by Roger Hargreaves featuring the goofy Little Miss and Mr. Men characters have been teaching good behaviour for 45 years. Now there's this twisted parody series. From Three Rivers Press, $6.99 each.

4 Findings: An Illustrated Collection by Rafil Kroll-Zaidi, illustrated by Graham Roumieu
From Harper's, this little volume is full of gems from the back-page column of the same name. Rude sales staff boost the desirability of luxury goods, for instance. Also, this: Service sizes in images of the Last Supper were found to have grown by two-thirds over the past millennium. From 12 Books, $20.

5 The U.S. Supreme Court Decision on Marriage Equality: As delivered by Justice Anthony Kennedy
The complete decision clearing the way for same-sex marriage across the United States, in a hardcover edition from Melville House Publishing, $14.95.





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NEW RELEASES

Bestselling author Kate Morton writes to please herself

Sue Carter
For Metro Canada

In her heart, Kate Morton has always viewed herself as a mystery writer. Together, the Australian author's five books have sold more than 10 million copies worldwide, placing her on the blockbuster podium alongside thriller writers such as Paula Hawkins and Gillian Flynn. But Morton's Gothic, romantic settings and historical time periods have made her books tough to classify — not that it matters to her multitude of fans.

"I don't think I'm officially part of the mystery-writing community in terms of how publishers see me or how booksellers position me," Morton says.

"My books contain history, but aren't really historical fiction. They contain mystery but they contain characters' stories, too. And they don't necessarily have that fast pace. But all my books start — along with character and setting — with a mystery."

That attitude might change with her latest novel.

The Lake House contains all the signature elements of a Morton story: a crumbling British manor, duel timelines linking past and present, and a female protagonist burdened with family secrets. But the story twists and weaves up until the very last pages, as it connects Sadie Sparrow, a detective who becomes obsessed with a case involving an abandoned child and her missing mother, with Alice Edevane, an elderly crime novelist who is harbouring information surrounding the unsolved disappearance of her infant brother, decades earlier.

"I wanted to make a much more explicit attempt at writing a mystery story," says Morton. "I wanted to have fun with this and make one of my characters one of those real grande dames of the mystery-writing world."

Morton's love of mystery started as a kid. Weaned on Enid Blyton's classic Famous Five series, she later become fascinated with the literary Gothic, studying tragedy in Victorian literature as her Master's thesis at University of Queensland. She was drawn to books by the Brontë Sisters in which "secrets and mysteries from the past can't be repressed and they come back to haunt those characters in the present."

Even The Lake House's setting is a nod to classic BritLit: the isolated region of Cornwall and its dramatic moors and cliffs served as the background for some of Daphne du Maurier's most famous stories. Morton says, "I wanted somewhere where it seemed possible that an abandoned house could be consumed by nature."

Before the publication of Morton's first published novel in 2006, The House at Riverton — about a servant who keeps a society family's secret hidden for decades — she had shopped around two manuscripts with no luck.

As a new mom, she had made peace with the fact that writing might just be a hobby. "That's why that book doesn't subscribe to any genre in particular. It was really written to my own taste," Morton says.

"In retrospect, it's not surprising that's the one people responded to because it's really heartfelt and genuine."

Regardless of where her novels are slotted or what genre is considered in vogue, Morton says she'll continue to write what interests and pleases her the most.

"I try to create a world that I can disappear inside," she says, "and I have to trust that means that readers will want to disappear into that world as well."

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

Australian author Kate Morton's five books have sold more than 10 million copies worldwide. DAVIN PATTERSON

TRUE CRIME

Mob boss story coming to TV

Independent Canadian production company New Metric Media has optioned the rights to a bestselling book about the final years of Montreal mobster Vito Rizzuto's life.

Bad Blood, which is currently in development, will be based on Business or Blood, a book penned by true-crime writers Antonio Nicaso and veteran Toronto Star reporter Peter Edwards.

The book tells the story of Rizzuto's "last war," after he emerges from prison — where he was sent in 2006 for his role in a decades-old murder in Brooklyn — with a choice: Would the 66-year-old Montreal mob boss try to rebuild his empire after his stint behind bars, or seek revenge for the killings of his son, father and other members of his criminal enterprise?

Vito Rizzuto
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Edwards said Rizzuto defied several mobster stereotypes: he wasn't physically violent, he had connections to top businessmen and politicians, and he held many meetings on golf courses.

"He played golf 100 times a year, a lot of times in the Dominican Republic," Edwards said. "The beauty about golf is that it's very hard to bug a golf course. . . . So a lot of what he did was there and golf really made sense for him.

"He wasn't a beat-'em-up type of guy, he was a thinking type of guy." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Bill Murray as himself, in a scene from Netflix's original holiday special A Very Murray Christmas, directed by Sofia Coppola. ALI GOLDSTEIN/NETFLIX VIA AP

Murray a makes holiday special

HOLIDAY VIEWING

Writer Mitch Glazer hopes show becomes an annual gig

Bill Murray doesn't do schmaltz.

But the Scrooged star does love the holidays, says screenwriter Mitch Glazer, who teamed up with his longtime pal for the Netflix-produced A Very Murray Christmas.

Consider the star-studded special a heartfelt ode to the season, delivered with the charismatic swagger of Murray's Saturday Night Live alter-ego Nick the Lounge Singer — without the cheese.

"He's just never going to let something be false sentimental," Glazer says in a recent phone call from Los Angeles.

"He has huge heart and he comes from a family of nine and he's got six sons of his own, so Christmas is real to him in a non-commercial, non-sentimental way."

Glazer says A Very Murray Christmas is the result of years of spitballing ideas for some kind of TV musical special.

It came together when he and Murray settled on a Christmas theme and their director pal Sofia Coppola suggested a piano bar scene at New York's sumptuous Carlyle hotel.

Glazer was tasked with crafting the story: Murray is helming a live TV variety show but a massive snowstorm prevents any of the guests from arriving.

The trio came up with a festive musical set list and mused on their dream cast. Murray pulled out his phone and started calling in the cameos.

"The first two people that Bill called on his cellphone were George Clooney and Chris Rock and literally just before he gets a sentence deep into it ... both of them were like, 'We're in. We're coming.' They just wanted to be a part of it," says Glazer.

Other friends soon joined the party, including Murray's SNL pal Paul Shaffer, his Scrooged co-star (and New York Dolls frontman) David Johansen, Coppola's cousin Jason Schwartzman, Arrested Development co-star Michael Cera, former SNL comic Maya Rudolph, Parks and Recreation alums Amy Poehler and Rashida Jones, and Coppola's husband Thomas Mars and his band Phoenix.

Almost all put their vocal chops on display, including Clooney, who provides rousing backup on Albert King's funk classic Santa Claus Wants Some Lovin'.

"Not only is he singing but he's doing a style of rhythm-and-blues singing that was popular and big in the '70s as sung by Earth Wind & Fire," Shaffer notes of the Gravity star, who appeared with Murray in The Monuments Men.

"I remember being in the house band of Saturday Night Live and trying to sing like that and there he is doing it. I don't know where he pulled that out of, though. But he came up with that that day."

Clooney, of course, showed up in a tux "and looked beautiful," recalls Glazer.

"I don't think he considers himself a great vocalist but he's got a lot of style," he chuckles.

There were other surprises, some of them oddly similar to the made-up premise of the fake holiday special.

Just as shooting took place the first week in March, two blizzards hit New York, dumping "snow halfway up the building" and helping to establish the mood on set, says Glazer.

The screenwriter says he would love to do it all again next year, and maybe again the year after that.

"Personally, Bill and I have talked about it and Sofia, we had such a good time doing it," he says. "Andy Williams and Dean Martin did them every year. It was good fun. I would love to do another."

A Very Murray Christmas debuts Friday on Netflix.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Crazy Ex Girlfriend is a musical rom-com that laughs at itself. HANDOUT

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

This musical is the right kind of crazy

CRAZY EX GIRLFRIEND, SEASON 2, EPISODE 3 (GLOBAL), THE SCISSORS SONG

Rebecca (Rachel Bloom), a love-starved lawyer who's relocated to sterile West Covina, CA — the home of her ex-boyfriend — confesses to her new pal Paula (Donna Lynne Champlin) that she's afraid to throw a party. The lights dim. Paula begins singing what sounds like a typical empowerment ballad: "Face your fears/Stare them down/ Don't be scared/ Stand your ground." A few bars in, however, the lyrics take a turn: "If you're in a burning building/And smoke is everywhere/Keep calm, take a deep breath/And stay right there!" Rebecca protests ("Really?"), but Paula, with enough self-seriousness to make Celine Dion blush, takes no notice. As a chorus of children runs in with scissors, she keeps belting: "You can fly, fly out of a window, fly out of a building, just believe in yourself!"

Injecting new life into old genres is tough in our post-reality-show era. Several series are trying to do it with irony — ironic telenovela (Jane the Virgin), ironic slasher-horror (Scream Queens, starring slasher legend Jamie Lee Curtis). I admit, my heart sank at the prospect of this, an ironic romantic-comedy-musical. But its creators, Bloom and Aline Brosh McKenna (screenwriter of The Devil Wears Prada), won me over. Their writing has wit; they've hired actors with Broadway chops; and they've hate-lovingly studied pop culture tropes (check out the "Sexy Getting Ready Song" in episode one). So Crazy Ex Girlfriend succeeds as both you-go-girl story and the ultimate send-up of you-go-girl stories. It lets us mock our cupcakes and eat them, too.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

POLICE DRAMA

Criminal Minds gets 2nd spinoff

CBS has announced that it will premiere Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders on March 2 next year. This new series will be bolstered by the fact that it will be screened in the time slot immediately after the original Criminal Minds.

Having created successful franchises from CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (now cancelled) and NCIS, CBS has moved on to Criminal Minds, a series that is currently in its 11th season in the U.S. To lead this new spin-off, the most watched network in the country set its sights on the former boss of CSI: New York, Gary Sinise.

The actor came to prominence in the 1990s with his role in Forrest Gump. His character in this new series, Jack Garrett, will lead a team of profilers for the FBI. His division will consist of agents enlisted to help American citizens in trouble abroad. The former Lieutenant Dan Taylor will work with a team that includes Tyler James Williams (Everybody Hates Chris), Daniel Henney (Hawaii 5-0), Alana De la Garza (CSI: Miami) and Annie Funke (The Intern).

Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders is not the first spin-off from the Criminal Minds series. CBS tried a similar project in 2011, encouraged by the success of the many spin-offs of NCIS and CSI. But Criminal Minds: Suspect Behavior did not encounter the success that was hoped for, despite featuring Forest Whitaker.

AFP

Actor Gary Sinise. HANDOUT

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Iggy responds to Badu diss

Iggy Azalea is no stranger to social media fiascos, which may be why her Twitter followers haven't heard from the rapper since Nov. 1. But being a trending topic can have an effect, as Azalea made an online comeback this week to respond to Erykah Badu's mocking of her at the Soul Train Awards that went viral.

"We are days from 2016, but I came online today and saw it's still cool to try and discredit my 2014 accomplishments," Azalea tweeted. "F— ing hell. Seems exhausting. Anyway, I've been enjoying the holiday season and I hope you all have, too." NED EHRBAR/ METRO

Court to decide if Gollum a bad guy

A Turkish court overseeing the case of a doctor accused of insulting President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has ruled that a committee of experts should assess whether the fictional Lord of the Rings character Gollum is good or bad.

Bilgin Ciftci faces up to two years in prison for allegedly insulting a state official by

juxtaposing pictures (above) of Gollum and Erdogan on social media.

Lawyer Hicran Danisman told the AP Wednesday that she was forced to argue in court this week that "Gollum is not a bad character" because she got "nowhere" with a defence case based on freedom of expression. Danisman said that prompted the judge to rule that a committee, including psychologists and movie experts, should provide an assessment of Gollum's character. Trial was adjourned until Feb. 23. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ADOPTION

Bullock shows off new baby in People exclusive

Ned Ehrbar
Metro | Hollywood

So remember in late October when a reporter congratulated Sandra Bullock on adopting a little girl and Bullock insisted the story was totally untrue? Yeah, not so much.

"If I had a second adopted child, everyone would be hearing about it," she said. And well, everyone's hearing about it now. It turns out she was just waiting for the exclusive deal she'd given People magazine to announce the news.

"When I look at Laila, there's no doubt in my mind that she was supposed to be here," Bullock says of her new daughter, whom she's now willing to admit she's adopted. "I can tell you absolutely, the exact right children came to me at the exact right time." Laila joins her first adopted child, Louis, who is apparently already all about the whole being a big brother thing.

"Louis spearheaded this whole journey," she says. And that's a lot of responsibility for a five-year-old. While I'm thrilled for Bullock and her family, I do wonder how long it will take for me to be able to trust her again.

Zuckerberg's $45 billion philanthropic bid stuns

CHARITY

Facebook CEO commits 99 per cent of stockholdings

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is shaking up yet another sector — the charity world — with his surprise announcement that he and his wife will devote the bulk of their wealth, or about $45 billion, to philanthropic works.

The move will eventually put him and his wife, Priscilla Chan, in the same philanthropic echelon as Bill and Melinda Gates. It also involves a new type of philanthropic structure that differs from traditional foundations, although details remain scarce.

Zuckerberg made his pledge on Facebook in celebration of his daughter Max's birth.

The Zuckerbergs said Tuesday they will, over time, commit 99 per cent of their Facebook stockholdings to such causes as fighting disease, improving education and "building strong communities." The couple had previously pledged to give away at least half their assets during their lifetime, but hadn't provided specifics.

The announcement stunned the charity world. The new organization, called the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, will pursue its initiatives through a combination of charitable donations, private investment and promotion of government-policy reform.

By comparison, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has an endowment of just over $41 billion, which includes wealth donated by the Microsoft founder and his friend, the businessman Warren Buffett.

The new initiative will be organized as a limited liability company, however, rather than as a non-profit foundation. "They want the most flexibility and they are going to use a wide variety of activities to achieve their mission," Rachael Horwitz, a Facebook spokeswoman, said via email. "So in that way this is not a foundation nor is it entirely charitable."

Zuckerberg and Chan with daughter Max. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The notion of investing money in companies that tackle social issues isn't new, but it has gained more currency among a younger generation of philanthropists, particularly in the tech world.

In the letter to their daughter, Zuckerberg and Chan described their goals as "advancing human potential and promoting equality." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Your essential daily news

TVs and tablets topping holiday shopping lists, Adobe data shows

Cities on the rise

The Claridge Icon condominiums will be one of the tallest residential buildings in Ottawa at 485 feet high. ALL PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

CONDO TRENDS

Tall condos are transforming skylines across the country

Duncan McAllister
For Metro Canada

Skyscraper condominiums are the norm in major urban centres across the globe. Many Canadian cities are experiencing an urban renaissance with high-density, highrise communities in the central downtown cores. This week, Metro takes a look at Canada's tallest condos.

A bold Icon

In the nation's capital, things are moving skyward. The Claridge Icon condominiums will reach 485 feet high with 45 storeys and 320 suites, making it one of the tallest residential buildings in the city. Icon is located at the intersection of Carling and Preston, near Centretown.

The bold, geometric edifice is designed by renowned Canadian architects Hariri Pontarini. At street level, the light-filled podium displays a subtle offset design, with cantilevered sections giving the illusion of shifting and expanding.

'Urban renewal'

In the west, Winnipeg is also on the way up. SkyCity Centre will be a mixed-use tower in the heart of downtown Winnipeg. Rising 45 storeys high, it is projected to be the tallest tower between Toronto and Calgary, with 388 residential units, 60,000 sq. ft. of office space and 20,000 sq. ft. of retail.

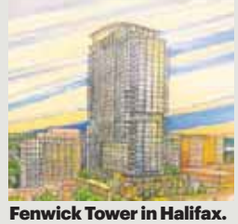
In September, Fortress Real Developments opened the doors to a million-dollar presentation centre for the SkyCity condominium suites. "Winnipeg's downtown is a heritage gold mine, but the addition of modern residential apartments of all sizes is needed to fill in the gaps," according to Ben Myers, senior vice-president of market research at Fortress.

"I would say Winnipeg is in the second inning of their urban renewal, and success at SkyCity will really be a catalyst for getting people excited about living downtown again," says Myers.

The 45-storey SkyCity Centre in Winnipeg will have nearly 400 residential units as well as office and retail space.

ACROSS CANADA

Halifax
Fenwick Tower by Templeton Properties is a residential apartment building in the heart of south-end Halifax, between Fenwick and South streets. It's the city's tallest building at 33 stories and 275 units, and the tallest residential building east of Montreal.



Fenwick Tower in Halifax.

Toronto
Canderel Residential just released their new penthouse suites high above Yonge Street in downtown Toronto. "While Aura at College Park is Canada's tallest condominium, it was also regarded as one of the country's fastest-selling condominium launches," says Riz Dhanji, Canderel's VP of sales and marketing.

Calgary
3 Eau Claire is an urban condo development located at 3 Avenue Southwest, steps from the Bow River Pathway, Prince's Island Park and the downtown core. At 48 storeys it will be one of the tallest condos in Calgary.

Edmonton
The Pearl is a 36-storey condominium tower currently under construction in the Oliver neighbourhood of Edmonton. The building promises to augment the city skyline with curved glass walls, a signature lobby and a wellness centre.

Vancouver
The Melville is a highrise residential tower located at 1189 Melville St., in the Coal Harbour neighbourhood. At 122 metres, it's the sixth tallest building in the city, and the tallest fully residential building in western Canada.

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Karl Lohnes
For Metro Canada

Know someone with a new kitchen (or someone who loves spending time there)? Look for gifts that suit how they use their kitchen, from the constant entertainer to the serious cook.

The two big kitchen colours for 2016 are copper and red so add a little style to someone's kitchen this Christmas with the gifts you give. Spend a lot or spend a little; but these pairings belong together.

For the chef

1 KitchenAid Tri-Ply Copper Stainless Steel 10-Piece Set
Give the conductivity of copper, heating efficiency of aluminum and the durability of stainless steel. $1,100, now $550. TheBay.com

GREAT ADD-ON GIFT:
2 Silicone Oven Mitt with Cotton Liner
The heat resistance of silicone with the comfort of cotton inside. $11, Walmart.ca

3 KitchenAid Ceramic 2.8-Quart Red Casserole
Commercial-quality ceramic resists staining, chipping and crazing. $70. TheBay.com

GREAT ADD-ON GIFT:
4 Volcano Stove Heavy-Duty Trivet
Keep the counters and table protected. $18, Walmart.ca

For the entertainer

5 Torrent Magnetic Drive Blender, Candy Apple Red
Give 18,000 rpms powered by a super-magnetic drive force. $600, CanadianTire.ca

GREAT ADD-ON GIFT:
6 Baileys Vanilla Cinnamon Original Irish Cream Liqueur
The newest (and most talked about) cream liqueur flavour of the year. $30, Baileys.com

7 Copper Steel Coffee Press with Walnut Handle
Hand-crafted coffee never brewed so chic. $58, Starbucks.ca

GREAT ADD-ON GIFT:
8 Starbucks Christmas Blend Vintage 2015 Whole Bean
Just for the holidays — get it while you can. $20/1 lb, Starbucks.ca

metro SPORTS

New York Jets cornerback Darrelle Revis is still in the NFL's concussion protocol, leaving his status uncertain for Sunday against the Giants

Senators left counting cost after Gudas carnage

NHL

Michalek out and Zibanejad doubtful after hellish night

The Ottawa Senators will find themselves short-handed for the foreseeable future, thanks largely to Philadelphia defenceman Radko Gudas.

The Senators confirmed Wednesday that forward Milan Michalek will be out indefinitely with a broken index finger on his right hand. Michalek suffered the injury as he went to block a shot by Gudas in the second period of a 4-2 loss to the Flyers on Tuesday night.

The 30-year-old Michalek is extremely popular amongst his teammates and will be missed not only for his on-ice presence, but the contributions he makes off-ice as well.

"You can't replace a guy like (Michalek)," said Senators defenceman Marc Methot. "He's got a lot of experience and he's one of the leaders on this team. He got hurt doing what he does best, blocking some shots. He's really good at running out to the point and getting those blocks and just got hit in the wrong spot. Some guys will have to step up."

Gudas proved to be a one-man wrecking machine as he gave forward Mika Zibanejad a forearm shot to the head in the third, forcing the Senators to finish the game with just 10 forwards. Gudas also had a big hit on Kyle Turris.

The NHL handed Gudas a three-game suspension for the Zibanejad hit on Wednesday afternoon. He will forfeit $15,994.62 US in salary.

The Ottawa Senators are likely to be without Milan Michalek, left, and Mika Zibanejad for Thursday's clash with the Blackhawks as injuries mount. FRED CHARTRAND/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Zibanejad is doubtful to play Thursday as the Senators host Chicago. The Senators were outraged no penalty was called on the play. "It's frustrating, especially when you see hits like that," said forward Mark Stone. "It's right to the head of Mika so hopefully he feels better and he's not out an extended amount of time."

While the Senators aren't calling Zibanejad's injury a concussion, the team has already lost five players for various lengths of time to head injuries. Clarke MacArthur hasn't played since Oct. 14 and Ottawa is without backup goaltender Andrew Hammond due to concussions.

"I don't know if there's much of a trend other than we're just getting some bad bounces," said Methot, who missed three games earlier this year due to a concussion.

"Guys nowadays are more aware now when there's something going on. You don't want to mess with it because you've seen what can happen to a lot of athletes who maybe try to come back a little too soon. I would like to think that it isn't something serious going on specifically with our club."

> **"It's frustrating, when you see hits like that.**
> Mark Stone

The injuries to Michalek and Zibanejad will create an opportunity for Colin Greening to get back in the lineup. Greening, who has not played an NHL game since March 29, was recalled just over a week ago but hasn't had the opportunity to get in the lineup until now.

"I feel pretty good, it's not like I've been out three weeks," said Greening. "The biggest thing I'll tell myself is to take care of the puck."

Senators coach Dave Cameron says he intends on going with seven defencemen Thursday rather than calling up a player from Binghamton. THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLS

Red-hot Giovinco is crowned MVP

Toronto FC forward Sebastian Giovinco has been named MVP of Major League Soccer.

It's the latest and biggest accolade for the 28-year-old Italian international. Giovinco won the Golden Boot as the league's top scorer, was voted top newcomer and named to the league' Best XI. He is also a finalist for goal of the year.

In his first season in North America, Giovinco rewrote the Toronto FC record book while leading the league with 22 goals and 16 assists.

$7.1M

Giovinco's salary was second highest in MLS, but he rewarded TFC by being directly involved in two-thirds of all team goals.

Giovinco beat out Columbus striker Kei Kamara and Kansas City's Benny Feilhaber in voting. THE CANADIAN PRESS

CURLING OTTAWA SKIP KNOCKS OFF CHAMPION
Ottawa skip Rachel Homan, pictured, defeated defending champion Val Sweeting of Edmonton 8-3 in early play Wednesday at the Canada Cup.

The Ottawa skip, who lost to Sweeting in last year's final, scored four in the first end and stole another point in the second en route to a comfortable win in the round-robin opener for both teams.

The tournament winners will earn berths in the Olympic trials for the 2018 Winter Games.

COURTESY MICHAEL BURNS

IN BRIEF

Predators lose veteran Fisher for four games
The Predators have placed centre Mike Fisher on injured reserve with a lower-body injury that will keep him out of Nashville's next four games.

Fisher was injured Tuesday night in a 5-2 win over Arizona. At 7:56 of the second period, Arizona's Martin Hanzal checked Fisher into the left boards inside the Coyotes zone. Fisher fell to the ice, and his right skate came into contact with the boards after falling.

The veteran has five goals and two assists in 23 games for the Predators. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Struggling Bernier sent down to the Marlies
The Toronto Maple Leafs are sending goaltender Jonathan Bernier on a minor-league conditioning stint.

Coach Mike Babcock said Wednesday that Bernier would go to the AHL's Toronto Marlies for 10 days once starter James Reimer is healthy. Bernier is 0-8-1 with an .888 save percentage this season.

His struggles got so bad that the Leafs called up Garret Sparks to make his NHL debut Monday against Edmonton where the rookie recorded a shutout. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Slugger Trumbo heads for Camden Yards
The Orioles have acquired outfielder/first baseman Mark Trumbo and left-hander C.J. Riefenhauser from the Seattle Mariners for catcher Steve Clevenger. The 29-year-old Trumbo hit .262 with 22 homers and 64 RBIs in 142 games this year with Arizona and the Mariners. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Six of the best help send Liverpool into semifinals
Liverpool recovered from conceding inside the first minute to thrash Southampton 6-1 away in the League Cup quarter-finals on Wednesday as Juergen Klopp's impressive start as manager continued.

Striker Divock Origi scored a hat trick. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FIGURE SKATING

Chan calm amid news of Hanyu record

Patrick Chan woke up last Saturday morning to see Twitter abuzz about Yuzuru Hanyu.

His Japanese rival had just rewritten the record book at the NHK Trophy Grand Prix, setting new world marks for the short program, long program, and overall score.

Chan and Hanyu meet next week at the Grand Prix Final in Barcelona, in perhaps one of the strongest men's figure skating fields ever assembled.

Chan said there's been talk about what he'll do respond to Hanyu. What will he change?

His answer: not a thing.

"I'm not going to panic, I'm not going to add anything at the immediate moment," Chan said.

216.07

Yuzuru Hanyu's record score in the free skate at the NHK Trophy Grand Prix.

"I'm not at a point in my career where I feel I need to prove to people that I have a lot more in my arsenal."

The 24-year-old from Toronto is making a comeback after taking a season off, walking away from the competitive arena after Hanyu beat him for gold at the 2014 Sochi Olympics. Chan roared back to beat Hanyu at Skate Canada International in October. Then came Hanyu's eye-popping programs last weekend. He scored 216.07 in his free skate, surpassing Chan's world record of 196.75 set in 2013. His overall score of 322.40 also erased Chan's previous world record of 295.27. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cornish ends a fine career

CFL

Stamps legend racked up two Grey Cup wins, 3 rushing titles

Calgary Stampeders running back Jon Cornish announced his retirement Wednesday after nine CFL seasons, three rushing titles and two Grey Cup rings.

The 31-year-old from New Westminster, B.C., was the CFL's leading rusher and top Canadian from 2012 to 2014. But he was limited to just nine games in each of the last two seasons due to injuries.

"I'm very comfortable with my decision," said Cornish. "Over the years with this team, I feel we've been able to achieve everything that is possible to achieve both as a team and as an individual."

Cornish broke Normie Kwong's 56-year-old single-season rushing record for a Canadian with 1,457 yards in 2012.

Cornish broke his own record the following year with 1,813 rushing yards and was named the CFL's most outstanding player. That season he became the first CFL player to win the Lou Marsh Trophy, awarded by The Toronto Star to Canada's top athlete, since Russ Jackson in 1969.

"Jon was an exceptional player for this franchise and I congratulate him on an excellent career," said Stampeders general manager John Hufnagel, who was head coach for eight of Cornish's nine seasons in Calgary.

"He earned his dues early in his career with hard work and commitment on special teams while gradually earning more playing time on offence. After he became the starter, he developed into one of the best running backs in the history of this franchise and this league."

Calgary Stampeders' Jon Cornish announces his retirement from CFL play at a press conference in Calgary, Alta. on Wednesday. The running back had an illustrious career. LARRY MACDOUGAL/THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **"Over the years with this team, I feel we've been able to achieve everything that is possible to achieve both as a team and as an individual.** Jon Cornish

Cornish made just nine starts in 2014 but still led the league in rushing with 1,082 yards.

The Stampeders went on to win the 2014 Grey Cup 20-16 over Hamilton, though the Tiger-Cats held Cornish to 25 yards on nine carries.

The three-time all-star spent his entire CFL career with the Stampeders. Despite making just 60 career starts, Cornish finished his career as the fourth-leading rusher in Stampeders history with 6,844 yards.

"My appreciation to the league, the Calgary Stampeders, to the media and to the fans can not be overstated," said Cornish. "I've been humbled by the magnitude of what this sport means to people in this country." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tedford's resignation puts Buono back at Lions' helm

The last time Wally Buono served as both head coach and general manager of the B.C. Lions, he guided the team to a Grey Cup victory.

He'll return to the dual role next season as he tries to get the CFL club back to the championship game for the first time since that 2011 title.

Buono, who has spent 13 years as GM of the Lions, will be back on the sidelines in 2016 as a replacement for Jeff Tedford, who resigned Wednesday after one season as head coach. "I'd be lying to you if I said I wasn't a little scared," Buono said. "But I'd also be lying to you if I said I wasn't a little excited."

Jeff Tedford

Wally Buono

BOTH IMAGES THE CANADIAN PRESS

The Lions settled for a third-place finish in the West Division last season with a 7-11 record. B.C. was eliminated in the first round of the playoffs after a 35-9 loss to the Calgary Stampeders.

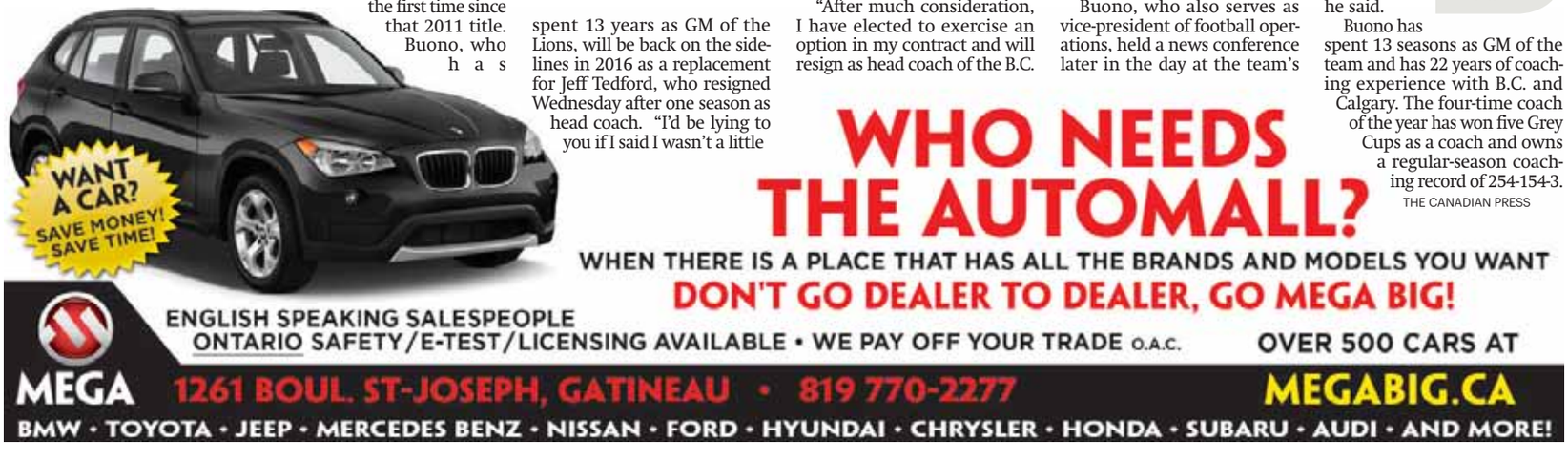
"After much consideration, I have elected to exercise an option in my contract and will resign as head coach of the B.C. Lions in order to pursue other opportunities in college football," Tedford said in a statement. "I want to thank Lions ownership, management, coaching staff and players and in particular Lions fans for the opportunity and privilege of serving as head coach this past year."

Buono, who also serves as vice-president of football operations, held a news conference later in the day at the team's practice facility. "My job is to do what I do best and build an organization and build winning football teams," he said.

5

Number of Grey Cups Wally Buono has won as a coach.

Buono has spent 13 seasons as GM of the team and has 22 years of coaching experience with B.C. and Calgary. The four-time coach of the year has won five Grey Cups as a coach and owns a regular-season coaching record of 254-154-3. THE CANADIAN PRESS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RECIPE Tuna Casserole

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Can #throwbackthursday apply to a recipe? If so, this would be ours. It's a feel-good, not quite straight out of the '50s dinner you're going to love.

Ready in
Prep time: 25 minutes
Serves 6

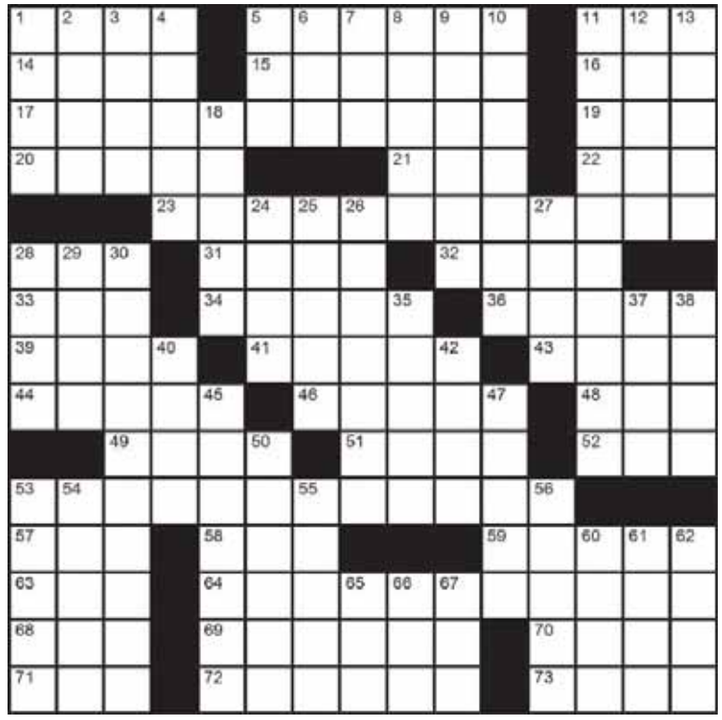
Ingredients
- 500g package of whole wheat penne or macaroni
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 3 cups cremini mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 1 leek, cleaned well and thinly sliced
- 3 Tbsp flour
- 2 cups milk
- 1 Tbsp dijon mustard
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 Tbsp dried thyme
- 3 cans good quality tuna, drained and rinsed
- 1 1/2 cups Gruyere, grated

Directions
1. Cook pasta 2 minutes less than package instructions and drain.
2. In a large pan with olive oil, sauté mushroom and leeks until they begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle flour over mushrooms and leeks, stir and cook for 1 minute. Whisk in milk and allow to thicken, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in mustard and season with salt and pepper after tasting. Add the tuna, frozen peas and thyme.
3. Add cooked pasta to the tuna mixture, stir and turn off heat. Pour the mixture into a casserole. Sprinkle cheese over top and pop into the oven and broil for 3 to 5 minutes or until the cheese bubbles and turns brown.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Belgium lang.
5. Finally: 2 wds.
11. __-Fi
14. Early helicopter
15. Housing market
16. Bon __ (High society)
17. Person consulted when there's a problem at checkout: 2 wds.
19. Year: Spanish
20. Computers: __ Pentium Inside
21. Canada's currency, curtly
22. Stop-_-__
23. Months and Meals... Canadian tradition launched in 1974 - the 2016 one is now out: 2 wds.
28. Month divs.
31. Window __
32. Jai __
33. '_ __. Canadian' (Molson beer commercial slogan)
34. Hagar's humorous hound
36. "Wonder Woman" star Ms. Carter
39. Jimmy __ (Shoe designer)
41. Outlandish outfit: 2 wds.
43. Cheese: Canadian __ Cheddar
44. Hillock
46. Places
48. 'Fact' finisher
49. Vancouver Canucks
51. Princess __ _ day (Bride's dream)
52. "Hiss!"
53. "A New Rock and Roll" is a 1974 song by what Canadian band?: 2 wds.
57. Saint John Airport code
58. 'Legend' suffix
59. Doesn't discard
63. Irish actor Stephen
64. 1985 movie for which David Foster co-wrote John Parr's 'Man in Motion' theme song: 3 wds.
68. Nose: French
69. Mulls over info before divulging it: 2 wds.
70. Stallion's speed
71. Wood-shaper's tool, variantly
72. Results
73. Archery woods

DOWN
1. E-J link
2. Hold on property
3. 'E' in QED
4. Web-accessing device
5. __ Vos Prec (T.S. Eliot poetry volume)
6. Writer Mr. Lawrence, et al.
7. "Well, __-di-dah!"
8. Actress Ms. Valli
9. Fashion's Ms. McCartney
10. Royal __ Museum (Dinosaur remains attraction in Alberta)
11. Audience appreciations for outstanding performances, fun-style: 2 wds.
12. Miami Sound Machine tune
13. Koh-_-__ Diamond
18. Paper fasteners
24. k.d.'s last name
25. Pew prayer's supports
26. Endorse
27. Quebec water brand
28. Candle's cord
29. Comic actress Madeline
30. Music style for Alfie Zappacosta: 2 wds.
35. Extra education instructor
37. Agnus __ (Mass prayers)
38. Finds the sum
40. Margarine
42. South American country
45. Celebrity chef Emeril
47. Belonging to Regina's prov.
50. Mr. Short
53. Ms. Loy
54. Plant _ __ and watch it grow
55. Putin's pshaws
56. Brawny
60. Ireland
61. Boat part
62. Hardens
65. Baton Rouge sch.
66. Five Guys Named __ (Stage musical)
67. Clip-__ (Non-pierced earrings)

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You feel you should be doing more, you feel you should be pushing yourself harder — and you're right. You have been lazy of late and you need to make up for wasted chances.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Don't take what others say too seriously because among all the good advice there is sure to be something designed to trip you up. Not everyone you work with is on your side.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Everyone wants something from you. Everyone wants you to give. Maybe you need to remind them that you have a life of your own and don't have to be at their beck and call every minute of the day. Be brutal.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
There may be many things you want to change in your life but this isn't the right time. Consolidate what you have got rather than go out and get something more.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You may be reluctant to admit that you got it wrong and said things that were untrue but if you want to salvage a friendship that is what you must do. Apologize with good grace.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Put petty disputes behind you and give others the benefit of the doubt. Some things are worth getting worked up about but the planets warn that what you are getting emotional over is not worth it.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
If life seems a bit too tame it could be because you are not setting targets that test your abilities. It's fun to drift along but already you are getting bored with the easy life.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You need to decide what it is you want most out of life and focus all your energies in that single direction. Forget about what might have been because it is what still can be that matters.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
There may be important things you could be doing but you must ignore them all and have a good time. Who is going to stop you? Who is going to complain? If it feels good then do it.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Do something that makes you feel alive. It does not matter if it is unproductive — you don't have to be on the make every minute of every day. No one can accuse you of not working hard, so by all means play hard for a while.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
You've got a lot of routine chores to do and you are not looking forward to them, but if you knuckle down and get serious you may be surprised by how quickly you get them done.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
If you take on too much today both your body and your mind will regret it. Focus only on those things that have to be done — the rest can wait.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

		1		6			9	
9			3			7		
	4				1			2
		6					4	
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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers.

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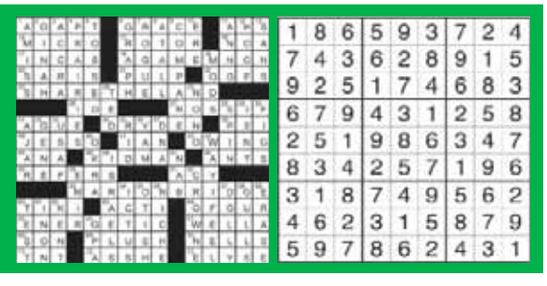

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2	5	1	9	8	6	3	4	7
8	3	4	2	5	7	1	9	6
3	1	8	7	4	9	5	6	2
4	6	2	3	1	5	8	7	9
5	9	7	8	6	2	4	3	1

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